

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 10277 051259Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-20 ACDA-12 IO-14 EB-08 NRC-07 OES-07 SOE-02
DOE-15 CEQ-01 /153 W
-----020523 051924Z /43

R 051221Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2588
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 10277

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH IN US
SUBJECT: INDIAN NUCLEAR POLICY

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, A JULY 4 MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS TURNED INTO A SPIRITED DEBATE OVER INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY. IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRIME MINISTER, SEVERAL OPPOSITION MPS QUESTIONED THE WISDOM OF HIS DECLARATIONS RENOUNCING FURTHER INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS. AMONG THE POINTS THEY RAISED WERE:

--- THAT THE CABINET HAS NOT AUTHORIZED THE PRIME MINISTER TO RENOUNCE NUCLEAR TESTING;

-- THAT UNILATERALLY RENOUNCING NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS PRODUCED NO CONCESSIONS FOR INDIA IN RETURN; AND

-- THAT MOST INDIAN SCIENTISTS CONSIDER NUCLEAR TESTS NECESSARY TO INDIA'S PEACEFUL NUCLEAR PROGRAM.

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PAGE 02 NEW DE 10277 051259Z

2. IN REPLY, PRIME MINISTER DESAI IS SAID TO HAVE REITERATED HIS BELIEF THAT INDIA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM DID NOT REQUIRE FURTHER NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS. MOREOVER, HE SAID, IT IS NOW UP TO OTHER COUNTRIES TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR SINCERITY ABOUT DISARMAMENT. HE THEN RESTATED HIS OPPOSITION TO THE "DISCRIMINATORY"

NPT. DESAI IS ALSO REPORTED TO HAVE INFORMED HIS COLLEAGUES THAT THE US IS NOW FULLY CONVINCED OF INDIA'S PEACEFUL INTENTIONS IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD.

3. COMMENT. YESTERDAY'S MEETING IS A SAMPLE OF THE KIND OF SHARP QUESTIONING OF PRIME MINISTER CAN PROBABLY EXPECT DURING THE UPCOMING SESSION OF PARLIAMENT.
END COMMENT.

4. ADDRESSING INDIA'S NUCLEAR POLICY, AN EDITORIAL IN THE JULY 5 "STATESMAN" SUGGESTS THAT DESAI'S RENUNCIATION OF NUCLEAR TESTS MAY BE THE PRICE OF THE FOREIGN--INCLUDING SOVIET--MATERIALS AND COOPERATION REQUIRED TO KEEP INDIA'S ATOMIC POWER PROGRAM GOING. THE ARTICLE ALSO DOUBTS THAT INDIA WILL RECEIVE MORE US NUCLEAR FUEL THAN THE 7.6 TONS ALREADY "CLEARED."
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE10277
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780276-0219
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780795/aaaadbxxj.tel
Line Count: 79
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5a09fc7a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2115360
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIAN NUCLEAR POLICY
TAGS: TECH, MNUC, IN, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5a09fc7a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014